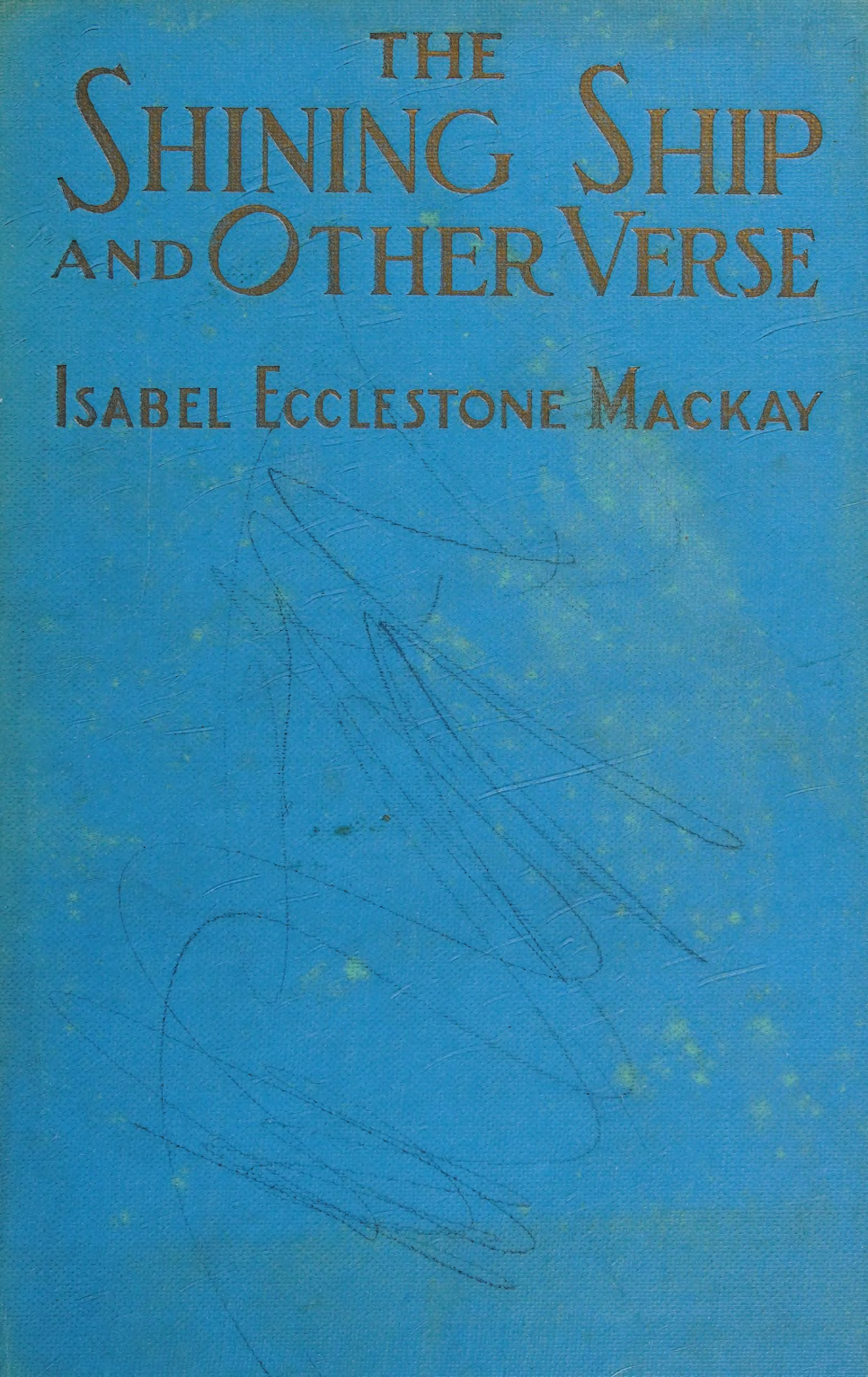
THE SHINING SHIP AND OTHER VERSE

ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY



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"Fresh fish!" he cried, but the Moon-man said,
"I never eat fish when I'm going to bed."

—*The Wonderful Fishing of Peterkin Spray.*

THE SHINING SHIP AND OTHER VERSE

By

ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY

Author of "Up the Hill and Over", "Fires of Driftwood", etc.

with Illustrations by
ELSIE DEANE

"Ah! she's the ship for me."

McClelland & Stewart, Limited
Publishers - - Toronto

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Printed in Canada

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THE SHINING SHIP

All day I see the ships sail in, the sun upon their spars,
And silently at night they pass between me and the stars,
Oh, many, many ships there be,
From Biscay Bay and China Sea!
But never comes a ship for me,
Across the flooding bars.

All day I watch the ships sail out, so brave and gallantly;
And while I sleep they sail away, impatient for the sea,
Strange ways are theirs, where strange winds blow,
Strange islands loom and strange tides flow—
But round and round the world they go
And never wait for me.

One day a shining ship shall ride at anchor by the quay;
From her slow-furling sails shall shake the scents of Araby;
She bears no name, she cannot stay;
But on her decks I'll sail away,
To China Sea and Biscay Bay—
Oh, she's the ship for me!

SPRING WAKING

A Snowdrop lay in the sweet, dark ground.
"Come out," said the Sun, "come out!"
But she lay quite still and she heard no sound;
"Asleep!" said the Sun, "no doubt!"

The Snowdrop heard, for she raised her head,
"Look spry," said the Sun, "look spry!"
"It's warm," said the Snowdrop, "here in bed."
"O fie!" said the Sun, "O fie!"

"You call too soon, Mr. Sun, *you do!*"
"No, no," said the Sun, "Oh, *no!*"
"There's something above and I can't see through."
"It's snow," said the Sun, "just snow."

"But I say, Mr. Sun, are the Robins here?"
"Maybe," said the Sun, "maybe";
"There wasn't a bird when you called last year."
"Come out," said the Sun, "and see!"

The Snowdrop sighed, for she liked her nap,
And there wasn't a bird in sight,
But she popped out of bed in her white night cap;
"That's right," said the Sun, "that's right!"

And, soon as that small night-cap was seen,
A Robin began to sing,
The air grew warm, and the grass turned green,
" 'Tis Spring!" laughed the Sun, " 'tis Spring!"

"The Snowdrop sighed, for she liked her nap,
And there wasn't a bird in sight,
But she popped out of bed in her white nightcap;
'That's right,' said the Sun, 'that's right'."

THE WONDERFUL FISHING OF PETERKIN SPRAY

A FISHERMAN bold was Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away.
And when he got there, he embarked once more
Down the path that leads to the Sun's back door.
"Ho, Ho," said the Sun, "here is Fisherman Spray,
But the cook doesn't need any salmon to-day."

"Too bad, Mr. Sun," said Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
But the wind was so light that 'twas half past eight
When he called his wares at the Moon-man's gate.
"Fresh fish!" he cried, but the Moon-man said,
"I never eat fish when I'm going to bed."

"What a fussy old Moon!" sighed Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
And when he got there, he exclaimed "My Stars!
I had almost forgotten to call on Mars."
"Fine fish," cried Mars and he smacked his lips,
"Charge a dozen or so to my next eclipse!"

"O dear, O dear!" sighed Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
And when he got there, he declared, "I wish
I never, never had learned to fish.
For some won't buy and others won't pay,
And I'm tired, and tired of sailing away!"

"I know what I'll do!" said Peterkin Spray,
And he turned his boat down the Milky Way.
He opened the Dipper (yes, honest, he did!)
He popped in his cargo, and slapped down the lid.
"Here's a kettle of fish!" laughed Peterkin Spray.
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away.

"And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away."

NAUGHTY JOHNNIE FROST

"Little Leaf," said young Jack Frost,
"Pretty Leaf," said he,
"Tell me why you seem so shy,
So afraid of me?
I protest I like you well—
In your gown of green
You're the *very sweetest* Leaf
I have ever seen!"

"Run away," said little Leaf,
"Prithee, run away!
I don't want to listen to
Anything you say.
Mother-tree has often said:
'Child, have naught to do
With young Johnnie Frost'—I think
That, perhaps, he's *you!*"

"Nay, believe me, little Leaf,
Pretty Leaf! Indeed
To such silly, idle tales
You should pay no heed!

I protest a leaf so fair
  Need not bashful be—
There's no reason why you should
  Feel afraid of me."

"Well, perhaps," said little Leaf,
  "I will let you stay—
If you're really very sure
  You mean all you say?
Do you truly like me *best*——"
  "Yes, oh *yes!*" he said,
"And, to prove it, pray accept
  This new dress of red!"

Very proud was little Leaf,
  Whispering with a smile,
" 'Tis a sweetly pretty gown,
  'Twill be quite the style!"
Then she chanced to glance around!
  "Oh!" and "Oh!" she said—
Every leaf upon the tree
  Wore a dress of red!

GARDEN RIVALS

Pansy in the garden-bed
To a Johnnie-jump-up said:
"Surely you are not connected
With the Pansy family tree?
You are much too small and sickly,
And your blossom fades too quickly—
Yet I heard some children saying
That they thought you *looked like me!*"

Johnnie-jump-up merely smiled:
"You are tame and I am wild,
But that there's a close resemblance
Any little child can see.
You are in the garden growing,
I, outside, still there's no knowing
But that you and I are cousins—
Nearer relatives, maybe!"

Said the listening Hollyhock:
"How you silly flowers talk!
I'm amazed such haughty spirit
In such humble things to see!
If you both were tall and graceful,
If you wore a dress as tasteful
As the one I wear, 'twere easy
To excuse your vanity!"

White Rose nodded to Rose Red,
"Did you notice that?" she said.
"Strange indeed, that homely flowers
Always boast how well they're dressed!
Did you hear the Wind say lately
'*Stiff* things always think they're *stately*
But for perfect grace and beauty
Give me—' you can guess the rest!"

"Doubtless he referred to me,"
Said Carnation Pink; "you see
Some are born to grace and beauty—
'Tis admitted by the wise—
And Carnation Pinks inherit
Beauty, with the grace to wear it—
Not that I would boast about it,
Only—well, just use your eyes!"

Larkspur timidly peeped out:
"What is all the strife about?
Every flower has some beauty—
Don't you think so? Why, then, fall
To debating with each other?
Some like one and some another—
One, I know (his taste is famous)
Likes the Larkspur best of all!"

A PROTEST

"I think it's queer that boys should be
Sent off to bed right after tea."

I THINK it's queer that boys should be
Sent off to bed right after tea
When it's so jolly out of doors
And there are lots and lots of chores
A boy could do—— I don't see why
They shouldn't be allowed to *try*.

The day's so full of things to do
I never seem to get quite through;
There are so many plays to play
The daylight seems to slip away—
Almost before I've quite begun
My bedtime comes to spoil my fun!

When I am big 'twill be all right
For then I'll stay up most all night—
But mother's big, and mother said,
"I wish that I could go to bed!
I feel so tired, little son,
I'm always glad when day is done."

(Wasn't that queer!) I said that she
Could go to bed instead of me,
But mother said, "That will not do—
Sleep is the thing for boys like you,
So you can grow up tall and strong
And never find the day too long."

"And will you take a long rest then,
And never, never work again?
When I'm a man will you be free
To go to bed right after tea?"
But mother only smiled and said
"Yes, dear—some time—now run to bed!"

THE WHITE CAP

ONE day a baby wave was born,
  Child of the tide was she,
Safe circled by the warm young morn
  And cradled in the sea.

And oh, it was a pleasant thing
  The bright new world to know,
To wonder at the gull's wet wing
  And why it sparkled so!

To smile back at the sky who sent
  A dress of dainty blue,
To thank the wind who chuckling lent
  A neat white cap or two.

Then came the kindly moon who gave
  A chain of jewels bright,
(For every little baby wave
  Wears shining things at night!)

And oh, 'twas just as sweet to lie
  Beneath the dancing stars,
To watch the glistening ships sail by
  With silver on their spars!

To chase the boats of fishermen
  And spatter them with spray,
To lift them high, so high! And then
  To laugh and run away!

'Twas harmless fun, but, whisper low,
  That cap the sly wind lent
Held magic and it made her grow
  Quite wild and turbulent.

So when the kind moon went away
  She took her diamonds too,
The angry sky grew cold and grey
  And took the dress of blue.

The naughty wave began to fear
  And sought her mother's lap—
"My child, the cause is very clear,
  Take off that saucy cap!"

And when the cap was off, the day
  Grew bright, the sky shone fair,
And fast asleep the wavelet lay
  With sunbeams in her hair!

FATHER'S VALENTINE

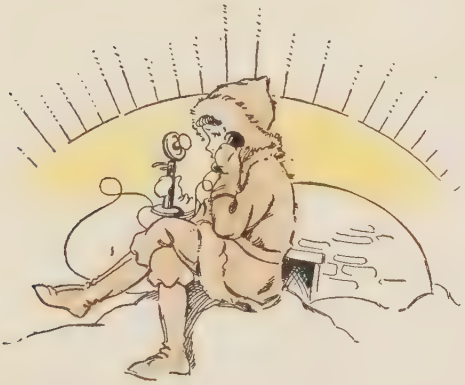
FATHER's got the queerest Valentine!
It's the picture of a little girl
With her hair cut straight across her face,
Plastered down without a wave or curl.

If you'd see her stockings you would laugh,
For they're made with rings like barber's poles,
And she wears the oddest little frock,
With no neck or sleeves but only *holes*.

And I said, "Who is this little girl?
I won't have her for *my* Valentine."
Father laughed and said, "That's just as well—
Long ago she promised to be mine.

"Once I sent that child a sugar heart,
Saying, 'If you love me tell me so,'
And she ate it all—why, little son,
That was mother, thirty years ago!"

A VERY EXCEPTIONAL ESKIMO



"When he wishes his friends to come to dine
He calls them up on the Polar line."

SHALL I tell you a few of the things I know
Of a very exceptional Eskimo?
The tale I shall ask you to take on trust,
For strange things happen and always must,
And some of the strangest ever known
Occur far up in the Arctic Zone.

In the Arctic Zone by the Great North Pole
Lives this Eskimo, in a scooped-out hole
In a great snow-bank that is mountain-high—

If you reached the top you could touch the sky!—
But his clothes he views with a greater pride,
They are all white fur, with the fur inside.

When he wishes his friends to come to dine
He calls them up on the Polar Line
To say, "Please come at the hour of two
And partake of a dish of sealskin stew,
With codfish oil and a water-ice
And a blubber-pudding that's *very* nice!"

When he goes to ride, he starts his sleigh
And never stops for a whole long day—
Lickety-whiz-z-z! Down a slope of white!
And a reindeer carries him back at night,
While the polar bears from his path he warns
By blowing one of the reindeer's horns!

When he goes to bed it is not enough
To hide his nose in a bearksin muff,
But his ears he wraps, if it's very cold,
In a feather-bed, and I have been told
That he toasts his head—for it really seems,
If he didn't, the cold might *freeze his dreams!*

WHO TOLD?

"—Well I just up and winked at him!"

Our teacher says there aren't fairies now,
Nor ever was—except in silly talk.
She wouldn't b'lieve that yesterday I saw
A really one down by the river walk!

I did tho', and his eyes were green as green,
He swung (he swang, I mean), upon a limb,
And every swing he took he winked at me,
And I—well, I just up and winked at him!

Said he, "There was a boy who ran away
From school-recess this morning; are you he?"
He looked so nice and jolly that I thought
He wanted to be friends and said, "I be."

"And can you be the lad I heard about
Who carved a pumpkin-head and made a ghost,
To scare your little sister into fits?"
I said, "She always was more skeered than most."

"And did you tell your cousin Julia Ann,
To make her cry, that Santa Claus was dead?"
You bet I wasn't goin' to own to that,
"Aw now, you go an' chase yourself!" I said.

His twinkly eyes got all so sparkly green,
He grinned the widest grin I ever saw.
"I see," he chuckled. "You're a bad, bad boy,
I think, Horatius Jones, I'll tell your Maw!"

Now what d'ye think of that? When I went in,
Maw, she just sent me straight away to bed—
For playing truant and for scaring girls!—
"A little fairy whispered it," she said.

A SPRINGTIME WISH

O, TO be a robin
  In the Spring!
When the fleeting days of April
  Are a-wing,
And the air is sweet with knowing
Where the hidden buds are growing,
And the merry winds are going
  Wandering!

O, to be a robin
  With a nest
Built upon the budding branches—
  East or West!
Just to swing and sway and dangle,
Far from earth and all its tangle,
Joining in the gay bird-jangle,
  With a zest!

O, to be a robin
  Just to sing!
Not to have the pain of hating
  Anything—

"O, to be a robin, with a nest,
Built upon the budding branches
East or West!"

Just to race the foremost swallow
Over hill and over hollow—
And the joy of life to follow
  Through the Spring.

LISTEN TO THE RAIN

Listen to the Rain!
Hear the merry sounds it makes
As it falls and slides and shakes
From the eaves into the street,
Where its million tiny feet
Hurry, hurry past the door,
Followed by a million more!

Listen to the Rain!
How it gurgles with delight,
Hurling from its dizzy height,
Falling straight and falling true,
Faster now and louder too—
See! The tardy drops and small
Cannot keep the pace at all!

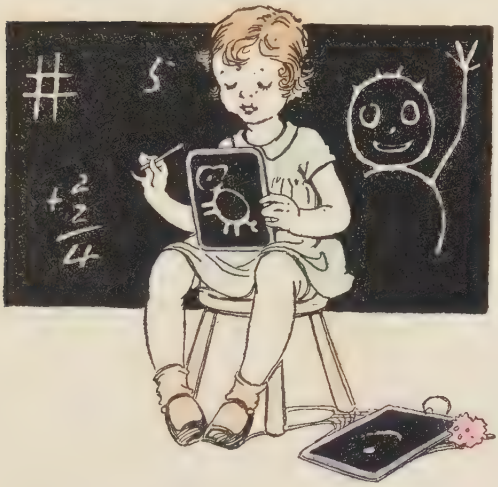
Listen to the Rain!
Ah! It's angry now—I fear
'Tis a scolding voice you hear!
How it scolds the drooping trees,
How it scolds the languid breeze,
How it scolds the birds, poor things,
For the dust upon their wings!

Listen to the Rain!
If you listen hard you'll hear
How the skies grow cold and clear,
How the primrose lifts her head,

"Hear the merry sounds it makes
As it falls and slides and shakes
From the eaves into the street."

How the mountain brooks are fed,
How the earth grows sweet again
With the coming of the Rain!

THE RIVAL ARTISTS



"The only things that she can draw
Are pumpkin faces."

THIS is the way Elizabeth draws.
Isn't it funny?
That's a girl, she says, and she says that *this*
Is our white bunny!
Elizabeth's six and goes to school,
She makes the letter
"A" all right, but her "B's" like this
And her "C's" no better—

She makes a house stand on its steps
  Without a cellar,
And doesn't attend to me at all
  When I want to tell her
That houses never stand on steps
  (Or almost never).
She just goes on and makes a pig,
  The queerest ever!
The only things that she can draw
  Are pumpkin faces,
And even then the noses go
  In wrongest places.
Now I *can* draw. But teacher says
  I shouldn't scold her,
Perhaps she'll draw as well as me
  When she is older!

SUCH FUNNY THINGS

THEY teach such funny things in school!
I never say a word,
But when it's four o'clock I just
Can't b'lieve the things I've heard.

They say the earth is *round*, just like
A ball, and you can go
For miles and never find the edge
Though you try ever so!

They say that should you dig right through
The other side you'd find,
And lots of China boys and girls
With pig-tails down behind.

(One day I digged a 'normus hole
But, though I tried and tried
And digged and digged, I never came
Out on the other side).

They say the twinkly stars are not
Hung up by strings at all—
But then you know they *have* to be
Or else they'd surely fall!

They say there isn't any sky
  Turned over like a bowl
And that the blue's not blue *at all*
  But just a big black hole.

And when the shiny sun goes down
  Like a great yellow ball
Into the sea at supper time,
  It isn't wet at all!

(But this, I think, is likely true,
  Because, beyond a doubt,
If it got very soaking wet
  Its fire would go quite out.)

They say I do not see the moon
  Move right across the sky—
But then, you know, I *do*, as they
  Can see as well as I!

O dear! they say such funny things,
  I'm hardly *sure* I'm me,
I hardly know the things I know
  Or see the things I see!

BEDTIME NOW!

"Little leaves, go to bed!" said the Wind thro' the trees.
"If you stay out so long you will certainly freeze,
I come from the North and I know *what I know*—
Someone's coming this way with a capful of snow!"

Loud murmured the leaves, all a-flutter with dread,
"O dear Mother-tree, did you hear what he said?
But the sun is so bright and the sky is so blue—
He was teasing us, mother, it couldn't be true!

"Why 'twas only last week that we changed our green
gown
For this beautiful mixture—red, yellow and brown—
Go to bed in these clothes?—it just couldn't be done—
Please tell us, dear mother, 'twas but the Wind's fun!"

The Tree shook her head and 'tis sad but 'tis true,
Though she shook it so *gently, a* stray leaf or two
Grew giddy and fell and the Wind laughed "Ho-Ho!"
And gaily he flattened them out in a row.

"Come on," called the Wind and he swept a low bow,
"You'll have to come soon so you'd better come now;
Never mind your gay dress, what's a crease or a tear?
In the scheme of creation it's not here nor there!"

"Someone's coming this way
with a capful of snow!"

They fell and they fell, and they covered the ground
And the Wind caught them up and he danced them around
And he laughed a "Good-Night" as he clapped them in bed—
But the leaves were too sleepy to hear what he said!

SAILOR, TELL ME OF THE SEA

Sailor, tell me of the sea,
All the sights and sounds that be—
When the shore has slipped from sight
And the moon shines clear at night
And there is no wind at all,
Can you hear the mermaid's call?"

"Ay indeed! 'Tis like a bell,
Sweet and far across the swell
Of the long, cool waves, and soon
You can see them 'neath the moon
Smile and beckon—ay, you can
If you be a Sailor-man!"

"Wondrous, Sailor, is the sea!
Dreadful are the things that be!—
On a breathless day in June
Have you seen the great typhoon
Pounce with rending shriek and roar
On the ship it's waited for?"

"Mate was I, down China way,
When the typhoon seized her prey—
Ay, indeed!—The brig spun round
Like a top on level ground,
Then she lifted clear and free—
And plunged down into the sea!"

"Sailor, tell me, is it true
There's a sea no boat wins through,
Where the air is never stirred
By the rush of winging bird
And the drifted wrecks lie by
Rotting 'neath a burning sky?"

"Ay, 'tis true! But no man knows
Where that sluggish current flows!
Only dead ships find the place,
Ships that go and leave no trace—
Many drift on that last tack,
Never any ship comes back!"

"Sailor, Sailor! Speak to me,
Gaze not so across the sea!
Bright it glitters in the sun
And the day is just begun,
Far and white the sea-gulls fly—
Why sits terror in your eye?"

Slow the Sailor turned his head.
"On a day like this," he said,
"On a day like this, went down

"You can see them 'neath the moon
Smile and beckon—ay, you can
If you be a Sailor-man!"

My good ship the *London Town*—
Ay, and not less lost is she
For the smiling of the sea!"

OUR HILL

TEDDY and Jock and I play on a hill all day.
Its top goes up to the sky
And Teddy and Jock and I
Are sometime going to climb so high
We'll hear what the star-folk say!

Just us can play on the hill—nobody else would dare!—
Its feet slip into a lake,
And some fine day we'll take
Our luncheon of apples and Johnny-cake
And see what it's like down there.

There's a cave in the hill up there, so black it looks like blue!
It hasn't ever an end—
But some day we intend
To go right in and around the bend—
But it wouldn't be safe for you!

THE WISH

" 'Tis the one wish I wanted," said she.

A LEPRECAUN-FAIRY was pegging some shoes,
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
With long curly toes, like the court fairies use,
All red like the sumach, in pairs made of twos—
"For fear they'd be lonely," said he!

"O Shoemaker green, I have spied on you thrice!
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)

I have called your name once, I have called your name
twice,
And now, Mister Leprecaun, pay me my price!"
"Ah, sure, if ye wish it," said he.

"One wish ye may have for the sight of your eyes,
(And only one, mind ye," said he.)
"So take your time now, that the wish may be wise,
For a wish comin' true is a bit of surprise!"
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)

"And what if I wish for a big, golden ball?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
And what if I wish for the blue sky to fall?
And what if I wish for the great world-and-all?"—
"Just be pleasin' your fancy!" said he.

"But, Leprecaun, dear, tell me what would *you* do?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
For how can I know if the sky is real blue?
Is the world-and-all heavy? I'll leave it to you"—
" 'Tis a bit of a handful!" said he

"And how if you wanted a million of things?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
If you longed for the rainbow and wished you had
wings,

And a gown of pink velvet and toffy in strings?"
"Sure, I think I'd go crazy!" said he.

" 'Tis plain ye can't choose," said the Leprecaun green,
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
"So, since I've no time for a shiftless colleen,
Sure, I'll give ye these shoes with a wish in between—
Ye'll find it there—maybe!" said he.

Ochone, and Ochone! He was up and away!
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
And red as the sumach the fairy shoes lay
With the wish in between—and one fortunate day,
" *'Tis the one wish I wanted!*" said she.

SECRETS

How do you think they make the dew?
The wise men tell, but they don't tell true;
For they are so very, very wise
They can't see straight out of both their eyes;
And a drop of dew is a simple thing—
Just a pearl that slips from a fairy's wing.

How do you think they make the snow?
The wise men tell, but they don't know—
They are too wise to understand
That every flake is made by hand,
Yet of ninety million and seventy-three
Each one is made quite differently.

How do you think they make the rain?
The wise men tell, but they don't explain
That a rainstorm isn't a storm at all,
But just the fairies playing ball—
Now listen hard and you'll surely hear
Them laugh and gurgle and call and cheer!

And the frost—why, some wise folk insist
That frost is merely a frozen mist;
They are so wise that they cannot trace
The wonderful weaving of fairy lace.
But look at the windowpane, my dear,
And you will see it as clear as clear.

Now these are secrets—if you tell
Be sure you look about you well
To see that no wise men are near,
For they would say "Ahem!" I fear,
And if they said "Tut, tut!" that way,
You'd be as wise and blind as they!

BIG SISTER'S VALENTINE

"Why did she put Ned's coat on me
And laugh and say she 'didn't see'?"

THE house seems wrongside out to-day,
Big sister acts the *queerest* way!
At breakfast father said, "My dear,
This tea is somewhat weak, I fear."
And sister said, "I quite forgot
To put the tea into the pot!"
Then when she heard the baby fret
She said, "Whatever's wrong, my pet?"

It took some time for her to think
She'd put no sugar in his drink.
She made Bob's lunch for him, but why
Did she forget to put in pie?
Why did she put Ned's coat on me
And laugh and say she "didn't see"?
Yet all the time she looked so kind
And smiled so nice we didn't mind.
I said quite low to father—"Say,
What makes big sister queer to-day?"
He whispered back, "Small son of mine,
Big sister's got a Valentine!"

HOP-SCOTCH

All day I play at Hop-Scotch
And hop and hop and hop,
And when I go to bed at night
I dream I cannot stop,

"—just one tired little girl
Hopping and hopping there!"

And all the world and everything
Is one big hop-scotch square,
With just one tired little girl
Hopping and hopping there!

THE RUDE BOY

THERE's a boy that goes to school,
  Billy Jenkens is his name,
And he's just the rudest tease!—
  All the girls think it's a shame.

If a girl has got red hair,
  He calls "Fire!" If she's fat
And has freckles on her nose
He calls "Seedcake!" just like that!

Oh he is a nawful boy,
  I just never look at him—
And to-day he called at *me*
  "Clear the way—here comes *Miss Prim!*"

THE DUTCH-CUT

"She just simply won't believe
Curls aren't stylish any more "

Oh! If *I* could only have
Dutch-cut like the other girls!
Every time I ask for it
Mother says, "What! Spoil your curls?"

Then she wonders why I hide
In behind the parlour door,
She just simply won't believe
Curls aren't stylish any more!

THE NEW CLOAK

"Oh, dear me, it's quite too bad
Teachers make a girl so shy!"

AFTER school I went to walk
Down a street quite far away
And I wore the new blue cloak
Mother finished just-today.

Teacher's house is in that street
And I thought perhaps if she
Just should meet me—or if I
Should meet her, how nice 'twould be!

Then—I saw her—and I hid
  Round a tree till she went by—
Oh dear me, it's quite too bad
  Teachers make a girl so shy!

LITTLE WONDERS

I'D LIKE to know the whisp'ry things
The trees say to each other
And what the stars mean when they laugh
And wink at one another.

I'd like to see *inside* the dark
That girls are so afraid of,
I'd like to feel the velvet stuff
The summer sky is made of—

It looks so soft and thick and blue
With not a wrinkle through it,
The fairies iron it, perhaps,
I wonder how they do it?

I wonder if the noisy brook
Is cross or only playing—
The birdies chatter all day long,
I wonder what they're saying!

The cow that jumped above the moon—
Did it fall down inside it?

THE SHINING SHIP

It must be there somewhere, you know,
  Where does the moon-man hide it?

Does that cow give the milk that makes
  The milky-way, I wonder,
And when it bellows loud, is that
  What makes the rumbly thunder?

O dear! There's lots of things to know,
  But though big folks are clever
And though I ask and ask all day
  They never tell me—*never!*

THE WORM TURNS

A NAUGHTY child just pulled me out of bed.
"O what an ugly, squashy worm!" he said,
And he meant me!—
'Tis strange how ignorant a child can be.

I "squashy"?—I, so gently born and bred,
That rose-leaves make a pillow for my head,
While in the heart
Of some sweet bud I watch its petals part?

And "ugly"?—I, so slim, so full of grace
That when my silky length is coiled in place,
Brown row on row,
A finer sight no summer day can show.

I wish that I might take these children rough
And show them where I live! 'Twould be enough
To make them stare
In wonder and amazement and despair—

No child that lives has such a home as I!
For roof it has a bit of bluest sky
So that the rain
And dew and sun peep in and out again.

THE SHINING SHIP

Its walls are hung with crimson and its floor
Is strewn with golden pollen, and its door,
All made of green,
Is just the daintiest portal ever seen!

My food is delicate. I daily fare
On crumpled petals, dew-steeped, very rare—
Oh, happy I!—
Until some naughty little child comes by!

JACOB UNRECOGNIZED

One day when I was lyin' in the grass
  Watchin' the little clouds a-sailin' by,
I saw a Jacob's ladder all of gold,
  It started from a hole up in the sky.

I was so scared an angel might come down
  I wriggled in the grass and lay quite flat—
You see, I ain't as good as I could wish,
  An' angels don't jes' take to boys like that.

When I got home I told my Maw, because
  I thought that she'd be int'rested—but pshaw!
She jes' gave me a look an' said, "My son,
  Don't go a-tellin' fibs to fool yer Maw!"

Now, Jacob's Maw b'lieved every word he said,
  An' told the neighbours an' made quite a stir,
And got it put in the Old Testament—
  But my Maw—why, you jes' can't int'rest her!

LITTLE BLUE-EYED FLOWER

Little Blue-eyed Flower
  Grows amid the clover,
Bees and birds the long day through
  Hum and flutter over.
"Dearie me!" sighs Blue-eyed Flower,
  "If I only had the power
Just to fly and fly and fly—
  Who would be as gay as I?"

Little Blue-eyed Flower
  Hears the water going
Singing through the meadow-brook,
  Sees it flowing—flowing!
"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
  "If I only had the power
Just to flow to meet the sea—
  Then I would contented be."

Little Blue-eyed Flower!—
  When the sun is setting
Red behind the distant hills
  You can hear her fretting.

"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
"If I only had the power
To be big and round and bright
Then the world would be all right."

Little Blue-eyed Flower—
As the days go by her
Sighs for something far away,
Something stronger, higher,
"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
"If I *only* had the power!"
So all day she sits and cries
All the blue out of her eyes!

Little Blue-eyed Flower,
Sighing in the clover,
He who made you what you are
Will not make you over.
But, bethink you, little Flower
Is it true you have no power?
What about your golden cup
Where a honey-bee may sup?

THE WIND FAIRY

"Or dance in the dust of the long white road
With a swirl of bewildered leaves!"

THERE'S a fairy lives in the heart of the Wind,
Like the mermaids live in the sea,
Her face she hides but you hear her sing
"Ou-ee, Ou-ee, Ou-ee!"

When the Autumn comes and the days are grey
And the Wind rides wild and high,

She leaps to the back of an eager cloud
And gallops across the sky.

Then down she swoops with a shrill "Ho, ho,"
To whistle and call in the eaves,
Or dance in the dust of the long white road
With a swirl of bewildered leaves!

With the soft West Wind she has songs to sing
Of countries far and fair,
And she calls to the birds with a word so sweet
That they follow her everywhere.

When the stars peep out on a summer's night
She strays o'er the garden grass,
And the blue-bells ring and the roses sway
And jostle to see her pass.

But her voice is sad when the rain-wind blows;
Like a child who is left alone
She sighs all day to the whispering brook
And sobs in an undertone.

One day she came to the nursery door,
And rattled the latch and cried!
And tossed a leaf at the windowpane,
Till I opened the window wide.

I felt her pass—and the curtains swayed
And the pictures stirred on the wall
But when I had shut the window, quick—
She was not in the room at all!

I followed her out through the garden gate,
I followed across the stream,
Then I followed her back—and in bed that night
I followed her into a dream.

I dreamed of a fine tea-party, spread
High up on a tossing tree,
With a nice white cloud for a table-cloth
And the Wind Fairy pouring tea!

THE VALENTINE REGAINED

"Why, it's my Valentine you've found!"
was what my mother said.

WAY high up in the attic-room where me and Billy play,
There's lots and lots of lovely things that mother's put away,
And if we're good as good can be, why, we can have most all we see.

To-day we found a *curyus* box, the lock of it was gone,
And inside was a picture card with funny writing on,
"O fairest Jane, my heart is thine, accept from me
this Valentine."

Billy, he didn't care for it but I thought it was sweet.
The picture was an angel-one with clouds wrapped
round its feet.
From what it said inside 'twas plain the angel must
have been called Jane.

I went straight down where mother was, to let her have
a look,
Before I pasted it away in my new pasting-book,
But, when my mother saw it, she just took it right
away from me.

She looked so funny and her face got such a lovely red,
"Why, it's my Valentine you've found!" was what my
mother said,
And then she hid away her eyes, just like our Billy when
he cries.

Only a minute though and then she smiled so sweet
at me,
"Oh, what a puzzled face!" she said and took me on
her knee—
"Why, mother's name was Jane, you know, Oh long
and long and long ago!"

SUNSET CITY

Sunset City lies along Twilight's smooth, grey sea,
And a river wanders there,
Flowing from no man knows where—
Swiftly, silently!

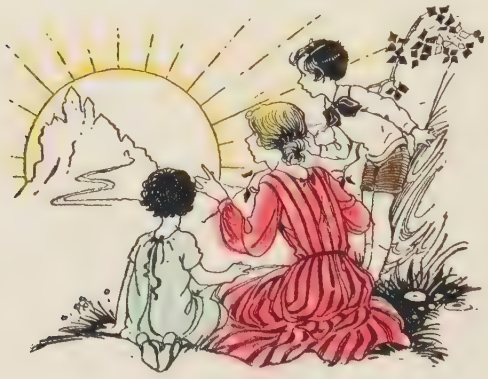
Glitt'ring palaces outline where the river flows,
Citadels without a name
Silhouette their towers in flame—
Crimson, gold and rose.

Quiet streets wind up and up to a magic height,
And the wond'ring eyes behold
Pavements of aerial gold
Delicate as light.

From the stately battlements banners flaunt and fall,
Lances gleam and pennons float,
(Hark! was that a bugle note?
Or a wild bird's call?)

Stately galleons anchor there in the Twilight sea,
Tyrian purple are their sails
And their decks are piled with bales
Wonderful to see.

Why these silent fleets sail in none has ever said—
Do the fairies come to buy
When the stars are in the sky
And we're safe in bed?



"Sunset City lies along
Twilight's smooth, grey sea."

Ah, if you would answer that, you must find the way
To this lovely Sunset Town
With the river winding down
To the close of Day!

THE CRY-BABY

"O ME, O my!"
Sighed the April sky,
"My tears go pitter-patter,
Yet why 'tis so
I do not know—
For there's not a thing the matter!

"I am really gay,
In an April way,
But, should I indulge in laughter,
(O my, O me!)
There is sure to be
A terrible shower after!

"I should love to smile
Just a little while,
For the robins sound so cheery!
But my eyes of blue
Have scarce peeped through
Before they are dull and teary.

"I fairly hate
To be thought sedate
And fickle and fond of sighing—
And the world won't see
(O my, O me!"
That it's not my fault I'm crying.

"For the fact appears
That without my tears
There'd not be a green thing showing,
And an April sky
Has to cry and cry
Just to start the earth a-growing!"

THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR YOUTHS

A YOUTH to the hilltop glanced and said,
"The summit's the place for me,
And day by day I shall force my way
To the height that I dimly see.
And nothing shall charm me to turn aside,
And nothing shall turn me back—
Not even a heed for another's need
Or care for another's lack.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And millions of men below—
When a man would reign, what's a little pain?
It isn't *his* pain, you know!"

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"There is room at the top. I see,
In this crowded race, 'tis the only place
For a sensitive chap like me!
When the people learn of my just desert
They'll bring me the gilded car,
Which is all I need to attain with speed
The place where the laurels are.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And nothing at all to do,
'Twill be quite my line just to sit and shine
And praise the extensive view!"

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"I crave for the purer air
And the bright light and the wider sight
And the peace which is found up there!
I shrink from the roar of the market-place
And the folk that I mix with here—
I am rare and fine and my soul can't shine
In so murky an atmosphere.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
The crowd you can leave by the way,
And to worship art as a thing apart
Is to be of a finer clay."

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"I'll aim for the highest seat,
But how fine 'twould be could I take with me
The dozens of friends I meet!"

But *he* never sat in the seat he craved,
For he wasted time on a song,
And he cleared the road and he bore a load
For a traveller not so strong.

For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And millions of men on the plain,
And another's need interferes with speed,
With nothing but love to gain.

MOTHER'S SONGS

Our mother sings quite different songs
From those we learn at school
And we all think that mother's songs
Are nicer as a rule—

There's one quite lovely one that tells
About "Sweet Ella Rhree,"
And one of "Darling Nellie Gray,"
And one of "Rosa Lee."

And one about a "Minstrel Boy,"
Who to the war has gone,
And all about his father's sword
That he has girded on.

There's one about "Toll, Toll the Bell,"
(For dark-eyed laughing Nell),
And one called "Swinging in the Lane,"
I like it specially well.

Another one goes very high
About an "Evening Star,"

And "Blue Alsatian Mountains," too,
(I wonder where they are!)

In fact the songs we sing at school
Are just plain everyday,
But all the songs that mother sings
Seem far and far away!

THE ATTIC WINDOW

"For every single way you look
Is like a fairy picture-book."

Of all the windows in our house,
I like the attic window best;
Because it's high and small and round,
And oh, so different from the rest!
For every single way you look
Is like a fairy picture-book!

Such lovely things there are outside!
  Red chimney-stacks, and near, blue sky,
And fat cats walking on the roofs,
  And baby cloudlets skipping by;
And pigeons cooing on the sill,
So I can stroke them, if I will!

The smoke plumes from the chimney-stacks
  Are banners waving to and fro,
While gallant knights, with prancing steeds,
  Through the long roof-lanes come and go.
The clouds at sunset often hold
Great palaces of shining gold.

The wind comes rushing 'round the eaves,
  Shakes the loose catch, and cries, "How do?"
Then whirls away to chase the birds
  And tumble down a nest or two;
But though he's rough as he can be,
He always has a laugh for me.

The sun steps in and cries, "Hello!
  Here's just the place I'm looking for!"
He sees my books upon the shelf,
He sees my toys upon the floor—
And then he sees *me* sitting there,
And runs warm fingers through my hair.

Just think! if some day I should be
A great white bird with beating wing,
And from my window fly away
Over the edge of everything,
Oh, wouldn't it be fine to know
Where all the summer daytimes go!

MEHITABLE ANN

"Something away inside of me
Just loves Mehitable Ann."

I LOVE Mehitable Ann!
Last night my sister said:
"Mehitable Ann is far from new;
I'd put her away if I were you—
Love Princess Pry instead!"

But I love Mehitable Ann!
And I *can't* love Pry instead.
If Mehitable's cheeks are pale and white
They lost their red that awful night
The puppy chewed her head.

And I love Mehitable Ann!
  She can't help being thin,
And there isn't a single reason why
She can't be as plump as Princess Pry
  If I put more sawdust in.

The Princess Pry is nice;
  And so is teeny Nan—
She's in-de-struct-i-ble, too, you see—
But something away inside of me
  Just *loves* Mehitable Ann!

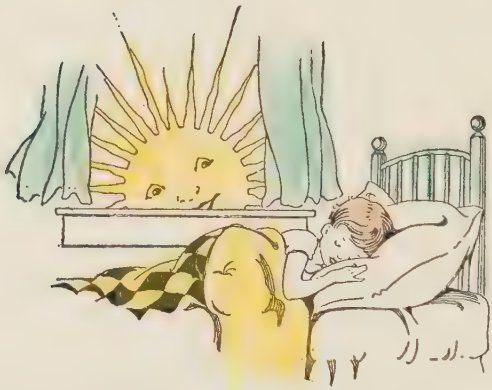
THE MORNING SUN

I LIKE the sun of afternoon
  So golden and so mellow;
I like the sun who goes to bed
  Wrapped up in red and yellow;
But I don't like the morning sun,
I never get my dream-thinks done—
  He's such a saucy fellow!

When I am just, say, half awake,
  He's at my window peeping,
And, though I shut my eyes hard-tight,
  I feel him coming, creeping
Across the carpet to my bed,
No matter how I turn my head,
  It means "good-bye" to sleeping!

He dances on my eyes, and shouts
  "Hi, there! get up this minute!
There's something doing out of doors;
  Look sharp! *You* won't be in it!
I do so hate to hear you snore.
The birds are up this hour or more—
  Hark! Don't you hear that linnet?"

Now that might be all right, you know,
If one were really lazy;
But when one only likes to lie
With thoughts all dreamy-hazy



"When I am just, say half awake,
He's at my window peeping."

And misty-queer, it seems a sin
To have that Mr. Sun dance in
To drive a person crazy!

WHILE GETTING WELL

A LITTLE bird sits on my window-sill
And winks his eye at me and says, "Hello!
Sick, are you? Why, whatever's wrong?
I'm never sick, you know!"

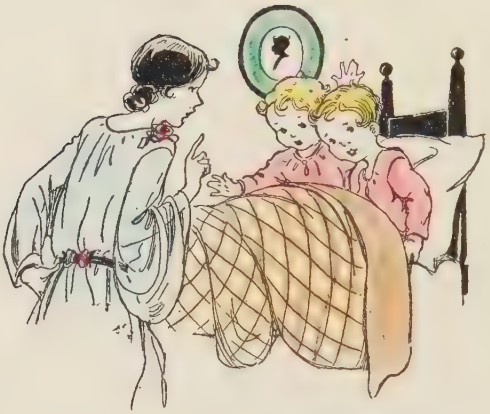
And, just at breakfast-time, in comes the Sun
To make queer wiggly patterns on the wall
And laugh and say, "Oh, lazy-bones, get up!
You are not sick *at all!*"

And when I shut my eyes I hear the brook
Calling and calling as it hurries by—
I *can't* lie still! I'm hot and *mis'rable*—
I'm 'fraid I've got to cry!

The leaves just whisper, whisper all the time!
The little clouds all hurry by so quick!—
And nothing seems to care a speck about
A little child that's sick!

Oh! Here's the Wind! How cool his fingers are!
He steals across the bed and feels my hands
And my hot head, and doesn't say a word—
I think *he* understands!

THE TELL-TALE



"And when she tucked us up in bed,
'A little birdie told!' she said."

We used to like the little birds,
  We thought them good and kind;
We never took a single egg
  ('Less we left lots behind),
And every morning me and Bill
Put crumbs upon the window-sill!

There was a Robin used to hop
  Right close beside our door,

He'd cock his saucy head and say:
"Please, boy, I want some more,"
And I would say: "Here's more for you
And some for Mrs. Robin, too."

But one day Bill and me went down
To paddle in the stream
And fell splash in! We'd sense enough
To know we mustn't scream.
And when we'd dried our clothes quite well
You couldn't hardly, poss'bly tell!

But when we both got home that night
Our mother knew it all.
She knew how we'd been *soakin'* wet,
And how we came to fall—
And when she tucked us up in bed,
"A little birdie told!" she said.

Bill thinks it was the Robin, and
He feels just mighty sore;
He says: "That bird can get his crumbs
At some one else's door!"
I—just can't hardly b'lieve that he
Would go and *tell* on Bill and me!

THE MERCHANTS

I AM the Frost.
I'll show you diamonds, laces and tapestries
Of all variety at lowest cost;
Weavings of chaste design
Perfect in every line;
Connoisseurs surely will buy of the Frost.

I am the Dew.
Notice my elegant bracelets and necklaces,
All of rare quality; pearls not a few;
Emerald and amethyst;
Opal all rainbow kissed;
Ladies rise early to buy of the Dew.

I am the Snow.
Let me display for you carpets most exquisite.
Choicest of bordering also I show,
Heavy and soft and white,
Spread in a single night;
Folk who have wisdom will buy of the Snow.

I am the Rain.
Something I'll show you priceless and wonderful,
Making these offers seem tawdry and vain!
'Tis but a cloak of grey—
Wrapping the world away—
Happy the few who will buy of the Rain.

I DO! DON'T YOU?

"I like Spring-time best—don't you?"

"SUMMER," said the humming Bee,
"Summer is the time for me!
  Richest fields of luscious clover,
  Honey-cups all brimming over,
Not a cloud the long day through!
I like Summer best—don't you?"

Said the dainty Primrose sweet:
"Summer is the time of heat.
  In the Spring when birds are calling
  And the crystal rain is falling

All the world is cool and new!
I like Springtime best—don't you?"

Said the Apple: "Not at all,
There's no season like the Fall!
  Golden skies thro' soft mist glowing
  Where the golden-rod is growing,
Reaping done and harvest through—
I like Autumn best—don't you?"

Said the Holly: "It is clear
Of all seasons of the year
  Winter is the best and dearest,
  Winds are stillest, skies are clearest—
Snowballs, sleighrides, Christmas—whew!
I like Winter best—*don't you?*"

MISTRESS SPRING-IN-A-HURRY

Dearie O me! I am quite a flutter,
I've forgotten to churn the new butter-cup's butter,
I've forgotten to set all the lily-bells ringing,
I've forgotten to tune up the robins for singing,
Dearie O me, and Dearie O my!
Was ever a Springtime so flustered as I?

Come, Mr. Sun, shine a little bit hotter,
Don't hide your face, please, and stop drinking kater;
Mr. Wind, get out your big broom for sweeping,
Shame, Madam Rain! this is no time for weeping,
Come now, look pleasant, the swift hours fly,
Shake out your cloudlets and hang them to dry!

Young Johnnie Frost, you run home and remember
You're not wanted here till sometime next November,
Ha, now we have it!—a little more green,
Brighten that yellow, slip pink in between,
Don't talk to me about colours that blend,
Slap them all on, 'tis the same in the end.

Send up the Mayflowers, sweet smelling piles of them,
Catkins and marsh-mallows, I can use miles of them,

Shake all those lazy trees, tickle their toes—
Don't plant hypaticas stiffly in rows,
Jumble them up a bit, crimson and blue ,
Wind-flowers, violets, trilliums too!

That's the idea! and now for the gardens—
Poke up the hyacinths ere the soil hardens,
Mass purple lilacs down there by the walk,
Line up the daffodils here—and don't talk—
Rainbow-hued crocuses, narcissus white,
Soak all in perfume and leave over night.

Here come the birds! What a stirring and questing,
Fat robins chirping and bob-o-links nesting,
Gay sparrows chattering, meadow-larks racing—
Swift as the shade of the clouds they are chasing—
Green on the hillside and gold in the sky!
Was ever a Springtime so sprightly as I?

THE NIGHT LIGHT

"For the pale little flame had flown away."

When there is no moon,
And the night is still;
And the window opens
On the dark hill,
And the little fairy,
Flying by,
Can look into my window
And see me as I lie.

All through the hours,
  No matter how late,
A slim light burns
  On a pale gray plate.
It makes a little circle
  Round as round,
Light on the ceiling,
  Shadow on the ground.

When I sleep and dream,
  When I wake and see,
The little night-light
  Is there by me.
It makes no noise,
  Yet it seems to sing—
A far-off sound
  Like a beating wing!

When the white stars dim
  And the East grows bright
All that is left
  Of my little night-light
Is a ring of wax
  On a plate of gray—
For the pale, little flame
  Has flown away!

MEMORY

O MOTHER, listen!
Was I once a bird?
Did my bright wings glisten?
Have I ever heard,
When the dusk was falling,
The clear, far note
Of another bird, calling?

O listen, mother!
Was I once a bee?
Sometime or other
Was life to me
Just a purple clover,
With glow-worm stars
When day was over?

O mother, hold me!
What have I been
That you have not told me?
What have I seen,
'Twixt a dream and waking,
That has left in my heart
This beautiful aching?

WHEN I COME SINGING

I KNOW a Song that is all my own singing—
But the Birds and the Bees and the Wind and Bells ringing

Cry: "Where did you find it? It can't be a new one—
We know every song and we never gave *you* one!"

Droned the Bee with a bumble: "Is your song like mine is?
I lost one today on the hill where wild thyme is."

"And I," piped the Lark, "left one hid in the clover,
Perhaps your song is mine—will you please hum it over?"

"No need," tolled the Bell, "all intelligent people
Know a song is no song 'till it's rung from a steeple."

"Mine is!" snapped the Cricket, so cross his eyes glistened,
"I'm *sure* she hid under a grass-blade and listened!"

"Oh!" gurgled the Rain, "I am all pit-a-patter—
This stealing of songs is a serious matter!"

"Perhaps it was lent," lisped the Brook, "though I doubt it—
Let the child give it back and say no more about it."

"She has nothing to give!" spoke the Poplar, unbending,
"Pray pay no attention—the child's just pretending."

"Pretending or not!" boomed the Wind, "as the Leader
Of Madam Earth's Chorus I say *we don't need her!*"

Oh dear! They're so jealous! They don't like my knowing
A Song all my own. But I do—and it's growing!

TYLER'S LANE

One day when I went walking
  Down there in Tyler's lane,
I found a cur'yus pathway
  That was never there again.

I wish I could remember
  Which way the pathway led
But every time I try, it seems
  To hide behind my head.

I know it had strange flowers,
  Its birds were strange and shy,
And there I passed a little child
  Who seemed as strange as I.

His eyes were like the eyes of birds
  That always have been free—
I did not speak to him at all,
  He did not speak to me,

But, suddenly, I seemed to know
  Something I had forgot—

And now I never can be sure
Whether I did or not!

(I'd almost think I dreamed it,
Only I lost my hat—
A quick wind came and blew it off—
You can't dream things like that!)

I like my little playmates,
I like my brother Jim,
But when I find that stranger child
I'd rather play with him!

Perhaps, if I just wait around,
The path will come again—
That's why I often go to walk
Down there in Tyler's lane.

SOMEONE ABROAD!

THERE is Someone abroad
Who is it that passes
O'er winter-bleached grasses
With sandals green-shod?
Who frees with His fingers
The brown willow-pod?

Who sets the brooks flooding,
The daffodils budding,
Who stirs the new sod?
Oh, there's Someone abroad—
See, snowdrops are showing
The way of His going
And wind-flowers nod—

And listen, the heralds!
The sounds of His coming,
The flutes in the thicket,
The singing, the humming—
The wind beats the willows
Like the cymbals together,

And Aaron's dry rod
Is a-flush with green feather—
Oh, Someone's abroad!

"Who sets the brooks flooding,
The daffodils budding?"

. . . . . .

Who is it? Who is it?
Why surely—'tis God.

BY THE POTTAWATAMIE

By the Pottawatamie,
Long ago, there used to be
Little Indian girls and boys
Playing with their Indian toys.

Where the birch tree, slim and pale,
Gleamed like silver by the trail,
They would play the long day through,
Fashioning a swift canoe—

For these Indian children made
Everything with which they played,
And the making was such fun
They were sorry when 'twas done—

Where the tall reeds bent and swayed,
And the river's haste delayed
By the wild-fowl's hidden nest,
Here was store of wealth unguessed.

Here they gathered plumage rare
To adorn their pig-tailed hair,
Quills to thread in chinking strings,
Pliant grass to braid for slings.

They could mimic beast and bird,
Trail the swiftest thing that stirred,
Scratch strange pictures on the sands,
Catch the fishes in their hands.

Meal-time meant just things to eat,
No one said "*Please wipe your feet!*"
Clothes, of course, they never wore—
Save a string done up before.

In the lovely autumn days,
When the woods were full of haze,
And the leaves came drifting down
Into rustling heaps of brown,

They would hush their whoops of glee
And, all swift and silently,
Through the thinning shade would glide,
Playing who could longest hide—

Not a whispering leaf must tell
Where a creeping footstep fell,
Not a trembling twig must sway
Lest it point the secret way!

One thing only did they miss
(Yes, I am *quite* sure of this!)

Not a single school was there,
Not a school-book anywhere!

They could see the heron wing,
Watch the winter yield to spring,
Wonder at the stars at night,
But they could not read nor write.

Did they wash their faces? Well
That is hardly fair to tell,
For they had no soap, you see,
By the Pottawatamie!

NUMBERS

NUMBERS are the queerest things!
Marching round and round in rings—
  Some—like 1—so tall and straight,
  Some all round and fat—like 8.

I like numbers, and I know
Every one, as far as twelves,
But the thing that puzzles me
Is the way they add theirselves!

One and one add up to two—
But I wonder why they do?
  Why do 2 and 1 make 3
  When they're different as can be?

Taking two away from four
(If you're mean enough) leaves two—
But if that two goes away
Then there's nothing left but you!

Numbers are the queerest things!
Marching round and round in rings—
  Numbers are alive, I think,
  Look at 5 and see him *wink!*

THE KINGDOM OF THE SPRING.

HEIGH ho, the Robin and the Spring!
The prating and the mating and the building nests a-swing,
The fields of budding clover with the soft sky bending over,
The bob-o-link's clear calling and the lark upon the wing!

Heigh ho, the Primrose and the Spring!
The growing and the blowing and the earthy scents that cling
To the lily breaking cover like a lass to meet her lover,
And the bloomy gold of butter-cups to make the wedding ring!

Heigh ho, the Children and the Spring!
The dreaming and the gleaming and the green on everything.
Every branch you peep in under shows a world of hidden wonder—
All the woodland is a Kingdom with a little child for king!

THE RAINBOW

The fairies built a bridge
From Here to Far-Away—
Of gossamer and mist,
Upon an April day
The fairies built a bridge
As shining as a tear,
As lovely as a dream,
From Far-Away to Here.

They borrowed from the sun,
They bargained with the moon,
A million dyes they stole
From gardens rich with June;
With crystal of the rain,
With sapphire from the sea,
With turquoise from the sky
They built it cunningly.

Then, lest some alien step
Its shining arch might scale,
They hid each rainbowed end
In Opal-tinted veil—
And never, through the years,
On any April day,
Has mortal crossed the bridge
From Here to Far-Away.

AT FIVE

This morning I woke up at five
And nothing seemed to be alive!
I couldn't find my voice to speak,
Even the bed springs wouldn't squeak—

There was no sound at all—The room
Was crowded full of cold, grey gloom—
It pressed up close beside my bed
And made strange singings in my head.

Then someone shrilly shouted, "Whoa!"
And all the strangeness seemed to go—
I never felt so glad before
To hear the milkman at the door!

LITTLE BLUE EGG

"That bird kept right on scolding us."

One day we found a little nest
With one blue egg, so small
We had to lift it out to see
If 'twas an egg at all
Or just a bit of bluest sky
Dropped in there by mistake—
We didn't hold it tight, of course,
For tightness makes eggs break.

And all the time, the mother bird
Made such a dreadful fuss—
'Twas just as if she couldn't trust
Her nice blue egg with us!
And though we put it back at once
And Ann said, "Sorry", too,
That bird kept right on scolding us—
I can't see why, can you?

THE FAIRY'S SISTER

One day when the wind rode high,
  Suddenly I missed her!—
In bright battalions from the sky
A host of singing leaves swept by—
Then the wind was still—but I
  Could not find my sister!

Round this mortal world, so old,
  I have sought her, calling,
Where pink-petaled dawns unfold
Where the blue ice cracks with cold,
Where the full moon hides her gold
  And the stars are falling!

By the ways of Here and There
  I have searched, unbidden,
Climbed the sinking sun's bright stair,
Told her name to every air,
Echoed it in caverns where
  Purple night lies hidden!

Never has she answered me,
  Not with song nor sighing—

Can such utter silence be
With a bird on every tree,
With the singing of the sea
  And a white gull crying?

Help me, children, mortal-born!
  Help me, lark and swallow,
Should you meet a sprite forlorn,
Hair like tassel of the corn,
Blow the honeysuckle's horn—
  I will hear and follow!

CLEARING

"It is going to clear!" said the thrush to the jay,
"There's a hole in the clouds and the suns coming through,"
And "Look how the grey is all patterned with blue,
Oh, it's going to clear!" trilled the bob-o-link gay.

The rush by the river shook lightly its spear,
The shining trees shivered the rain-drops away
And, high o'er the billowing, sweet-smelling hay,
A meadow-lark sang "It is going to clear!"

TIGER!

"Some day when I am grown up tall,
I'll step on him!—you'll see."

THERE is a TIGER in our hall—
He lies so flat and still
He never seems to move at all,
But, some time, p'r'aps he *will!*

He never turns his head when I
Come downstairs on tiptoes,
Nor ever looks as I pass by,
But every time *he knows*—

He knows when I come in from play
  And when I go to bed,
He knows the things I want to say
  And everything I've said.

One day I said: "I'm not afraid
  Of any old, dead skin!"
And, though no slightest sound he made,
  I felt that Tiger grin!

Some day, when I am grown up tall,
  I'll *step on him!*—you'll see,
I'll teach that Tiger in our hall
  He's not the boss of me!

NOBODY KNOWS

Nobody knows
Where Today goes—
When its bright hours
Darken and close,
Gently it slips
Out of our ken,
But if we ever
Shall greet it again
Nobody, nobody knows!

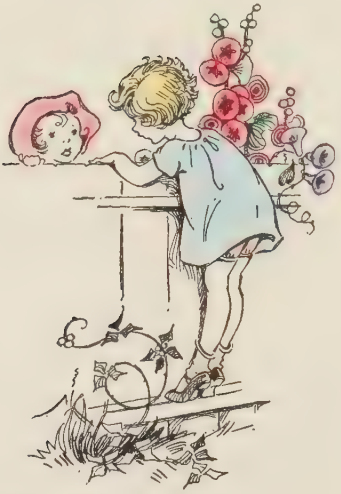
Nobody knows
Whence the Wind blows—
Somewhere it must
Have a home, I suppose;
Somewhere to store
All the salt of the sea
And the sweets of wild flowers,
But where it may be
Nobody, nobody knows!

Nobody knows
Why the grass grows—
Hidden all winter
Beneath the cold snows,
Sudden in spring
It is growing and green,
But what voice has called it
And where it has been,
Nobody, nobody knows!

Nobody knows
Any of those
Strange, secret things—
Scent of a rose,
Swell of the tide,
Light of a star—
Only in sleep
May we dream where they are
For nobody, nobody knows!

CYNTHIA JANE

(A MORAL TALE)



"But Lucinda May Spence
called her over the fence."

"MY DEAR," said her mother to Cynthia Jane,
"What is this that I see in your stocking?
A child of your years should be saddened to tears
By a sight so untidy and shocking."

"I will mend it at once," cried sweet Cynthia Jane,
All abashed at such sad dereliction—
But Lucinda May Spence called her over the fence
And—Alas! How too rare is perfection!

The darning-wool ball, found that day by the cat,
Shows the dear child *intended* to do it,
But, when sleep closed the game of Lucinda and Jane,
The stocking still lay where she threw it!

Swift punishment came in a terrible dream
Of rude boys who, laughing and mocking,
Said again and again: "Look at Cynthia Jane,
Come to school *with a hole in her stocking!*"

THE CHRISTMAS QUEST

"Little, lonely shepherd lad,
  Wherefore do you weep?"
"Sir, my father seeks a star;
  I must watch the sheep.

"Very lonely is the plain
  Very high the star—
Pray you, did you meet a lamb?
  One has wandered far."

"Nay, I met no wandering lamb,
  Little shepherd lad;
Is it but the lonely plain
  That has made you sad?"

"Sir, my father and the rest
Heard a heavenly sound;
I heard nothing, save the sheep
  Bleating all around!

"Wondrous things they heard and saw
  (Though the night was still)
I saw nothing, save my lambs
  White against the hill.

"Light was on my father's face
When he went away,
Fain I, too, had sought the star,
But he bade me stay.

" 'This high thing is not for you,
Who art but a lad,'
Said my father—that is why
I at heart am sad."

"Nay, my little shepherd lad,"
(Sweet the stranger smiled)
"When your father finds the star
He will find—a Child!"

THE LOST THOUGHT

THERE was a thought that through my mind
  Sped with a whirling glow,
It was more wild and beautiful
  Than other thoughts I know—
Oh, much more beautiful and wild
  Than thoughts which come and go!

It rose within me like a dawn
  That hides a singing bird,
It left an echo of a song
  Sweeter than songs I've heard—
Oh, sweeter far than any song
  My ears have ever heard.

All day I've searched inside my mind—
  Sometimes it almost seemed
I caught an echo and a glow,
  But mother says I dreamed—
Oh, I should like to dream again
  If 'twas that thought I dreamed!

OUTSIDE

"But what if I should scare some elf—Outside?"

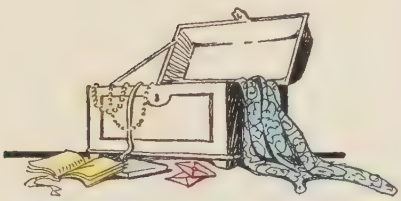
WHEN the night fire flares up red
  Into the chimney wide,
And I am s'posed to be in bed,
  I like to slip and hide
Behind the back of father's chair
And, when they quite forget I'm there,
I like to think
Of how the night is black as ink
  Outside!

The poplar trees down in the park,
  All day so stiff with pride,
Stand shivering inside the dark
  Quite limp and terrified—
I'd like to call out "Boo!" beneath,
And listen to their chatt'ry teeth,
But—I don't know—
To do it I should have to go
  Outside!

Our black cat with her tail all still
  Is watching, yellow-eyed,
Something beyond the window-sill
  That no one else has spied.
Soon she will go with padding feet
Out through the door and down the street.
I think she knows
What she won't tell—except to those
  Outside!

Of course there aren't witches now
  (What was that voice that cried?)
I don't mind witches anyhow
  (Was that the wind that sighed?)
For two brass pins I'd run around
The house and through the croquet ground—
I'm brave myself—
But what if I should scare some elf
  Outside?

YESTERDAY



Ah, how I wish I knew
Where Yesterday has gone—
  If I could find its track
  I'd run and bring it back—
  It was a lovely, glor'us day,
  And then it went away!

Perhaps I might find, too,
My little playmate, John—
  He's left and lost somewhere,
  And maybe it is *there!*
  Maybe, he played so late
  Today just couldn't wait!

TODAY

It is so nice to have Today
A pleasant little place to play,
With no way in and no way out,
And shining windows all about,
And things just going to begin,
All peeking out and peeking in!

TOMORROW

I wonder where Tomorrow hides?
I know that it must be
Upon the other side of Night
(The side I cannot see)
I try so hard to get there first,
Before it slips away,
But, every, every time I wake,
Tomorrow is Today!

THE MERMAID

Come hither, little Millicent, and sit upon my knee,
I have a curious tale to tell of strange things and the sea—
Strange is the land, my Millicent, but stranger is the sea!

What happened was in Danger Bay, in sight of Cape Farewell,
A brisk young storm came breezing up with a ginger-colored swell—
You never know how hard 'twill blow with a ginger-colored swell!

The bosun piped all hands on deck, the which to shorten sail,
When what d'you think we saw adrift in the teeth of that whistling gale?
Why—a young mermaid, that had got mislaid, alone in that nasty gale!

Now it wasn't a easy thing to do, but I'm wishful to record
By a pretty bit of seamanship we got that gal aboard—
We tacked a bit and slacked a bit and hauled her safe aboard.

Yet never a "thank ye!" did we get for not a word
said she,
All dripping on the dripping deck as graceful as may be,
As graceful as a cat that has no fear of what may be.

Strange seaweeds wrapped her like a cloak; her arms
were chill and bare,
Her eyes shone bright as drownèd gems behind her wet,
gold hair—
As lights half seen, through water green, they glimmered
through her hair!

The salt lay on her parted lips like rime on coral red
But nothing did she answer to a single word we said—
No word at all to aught or all of anything we said!

Then spoke the Captain bluff and brief, though he
shuffled where he stood,
"Maybe a dish o'tea—or two—would do the lady good—
A dish o' tea, with rum," said he, "does anybody good!"

The mermaid's eyes turned greener still and, all at once
she smiled,
No innocenter smile could be, not even on a child—
It almost seemed that we had dreamed and that she
was a child!

But as we wondered, smiling back, no one knew
whence nor how
A terrible great wave arose and smote us on our bow—
Rose like a hill, stood stiff and still, and fell upon our
bow!

So—that's the tale, small Millicent, of happ'nings that
befell
Poor sailormen of which I am the last one left to tell—
The last and lonely only one that's left alive to tell!

For you must know, what we knew not—before that
ill-starred trip—
Mermaids are pleasant to the eye but fatal to a ship—
Oh, lovely they, with waves at play, but doom unto
a ship!

SKIPPING SONG

"Skip on your toes if you want to skip right."

Skippety skip, skippety skip!
Under and over, with never a slip,
Pepper and salt, pepper and salt!
Over and under with never a halt—
  That's how it's done—
  Isn't it fun?
And isn't skipping easy?

Skippety skip, skippety skip!
Hold the rope slackly, give it a flip,
Shut your lips tight, make your feet light,
Skip on your *toes* if you want to skip right—
  Hold your head straight—
  Isn't it great
That skipping is so easy?

Skippety skip, skippety skip!
Steady, now, steady!—ah, that was a slip!
Don't watch your *feet,* count every beat—
Skipping will make you both nimble and neat—
  One hundred and one?
  Very well done!
  And *isn't* skipping easy?

REALITY

"While I am just a little girl
With straight brown hair that will not curl!"

Oh, it is nice to lie in bed
With a fat pillow for my head
And ironed sheets, so straight and white,
And little flickery bits of light
Chased by long shadows on the wall,
Like goblin children playing ball!

I have such nice thinks in my head,
The thinks I save to think in bed,
Curious things!—like knights and kings
And magic birds with golden wings,
White cats that talk instead of purr—
A Princess, too—*and I am her!*

But when night brings another day
And breakfast comes and school and play—
I can't feel sure about that cat,
And kings wear black coats and a hat,
While I am just a little girl
With straight, brown hair that will not curl!

THE WOOD-VOICE

WOULD you learn of the Forest?
Its tears and its laughter—
  The lore of the trail
  Where the sunlight is pale
And the shadows creep after?
Be still, then, and listen,
All you who are seeking,
For 'tis the hushed voice
Of the forest that's speaking!
"*I live in the trees—*
I am always there, singing,
My song has no end
As it knew no beginning.
Some call me the Wind,
Some, the Wind's-Little-Brother—
I am the Wood-voice,
Neither one nor the other—
The Wind is from far
And he sings of great spaces,
I am small and I sing
Of the dim, woody places.
In my song is the note
Of the ferns and the mosses

That shrink in the shade
Of the Maple that tosses
Free arms far above—
And that note from the thicket,
Insistent and clear,
Is the tiny wood-cricket!—
Hush! Bend a quick ear,
Do you catch a tone falling
So faint, yet so sweet?
'Tis the forest brook, calling,
As, ceaseless, it slips
Through the tangle above it
To linger awhile
With the flowers that love it.
Look deep in its heart—
There the ghost-leaves are lying
In that strange other life
Which they enter by dying—
Step soft—you will hear
Them still whisper together
Of the wind and the sun
And the sweet summer weather—
. . . . . .
"And now a new note!
(Few, if any, who hear it
Know 'tis aught save a branch
And the wind passing near it!)

'Tis the tall-standing pine
Who, in whispers, engages
A spruce bending near,
And the secrets of ages
Pass soft overhead!
Hush! Be still; you will hear them—
Nor fear to believe
Since all Heaven is near them!"

Would you learn of the Forest
Its tears and its laughter?
  Go follow the trail
  When the sunlight lies pale
And the shadows creep after!

EPITAPH FOR A STRAY

Quite a nice dog is laid below,
His name nobody seemed to know—
If any of his folks pass by,
He was a dog with one blind eye.
The other one was not quite new
But always saw enough for two;
And, though both ears were badly bit,
He never seemed to think of it;
Nor did he mind his crooked leg—
He used it to sit up and beg—
In color he was rather fair
(Though darker where he had most hair.)
His way with other dogs was mild,
While, as for cats—he merely smiled!
His was a heart too kind to bite—
He only let you *think he might!*
So, when he died, it was a shame
No one could call him by his name—
For such a dog, it seemed too sad—
We were the only folks he had!

LOST SUMMER

WHITHER are you fled
  Summertime and roses?
Are you really dead
  As the world supposes?
Or in some lone place
Where no footstep passes,
Do you hide your face
  In the scented grasses?

Sleeping, do you dream
  All your brief life over,
Hear the rippling stream,
  Smell the budding clover?
Dreaming, do you fall
  Into deeper slumber,
Caring not at all
  How the seasons number?

Or when April's breeze
  Sets the spring's green fire
Leaping through the trees,
  Will the old desire
Stir in joyous pain?
  As the circle closes
Will you wake again
  Summertime and roses?

BELLS

I HEAR the bells ring every day,
With voices large and round,
But when they ring on Sunday
They have a Sunday-sound.
Nobody seems to know just why—
I think perhaps the air,
So full of shining emptiness,
Is glad to have them there.

THE THREE KNIGHTS

(OLD GAME)

"HERE come three knights
All out of Spain
A-courting for
Your daughter Jane."
But one is dwarfed and one is old
And one has cruel lips and cold!

"My daughter Jane
Is yet too young
To understand
Your flattering tongue."
The one with cruel lips drew near
And laid pale hands upon my dear!

"Be she young,
Or be she old,
For her beauty
She must be sold."
He wore a long plume and a sword
And no one there durst speak a word!
. . . . . .

But, oh, his gold, when they were wed
Was not as golden as her head—
And never, though I sail to Spain,
Shall I behold my daughter Jane!

EVERYBODY UP

Madam April woke one morning
Feeling fresh and sprightly,
Saw a robin strutting round,
Touched the bare earth lightly—

Warm beneath dead leaves and bracken
Sleepers without number
Felt her touch and tried to rise,
Shaking winter from soft eyes,
Still in love with slumber.

Snowdrop, daffodil and crocus,
Wakened willy-nilly,
Scrambled out without their caps,
Found it pleasant—but perhaps
Just a trifle chilly!

In the coppice pussy-willows,
Hooded, grey and furry,
Heard the prisoned brooklet shout:
"I'm awake! please let me out!—"
Heard the frog croak "Hurry!"

Mother trees, protesting, murmured
"Why is youth so daring?
I can't keep my buds in bed—
They will catch cold-in-the-head,
After all my caring!"

No one listened—youth as ever,
Needed none to warn her—
Every growing, living thing
Stood tip-toe—and just then, Spring
Came around the corner!

COMPENSATIONS

"An' when the sleigh went scootin' past their door
With Jess an' me
They blubbered till they froze the window pane
An' couldn't see."

THERE's goin' to be a Chris'mas-tree next door!
Jess an' me know;
We saw them buyin' candles to the store—
An't must be so!

Ma says the Joneses folks is awful proud,
An' so you see,
Their little boy an' girl don't play around
With Jess an me.

When me and Jess make snow-forts in the street,
They sit an' stare
Outen their windows, but they never come—
They wouldn't dare!

An' when we made that big terboggan-slide,
They bawled, I bet,
When their ma told them, No, they couldn't play,
Fear they'd get wet!

An' oh, that day when all the street was ice!
And we'd begin
An' slide fer half a mile, their ma she said
They must stay in!

An' when the sleigh went scootin' past their door,
With Jess an' me,
They blubbered till they froze the window-pane,
An' couldn't see.

But now they're goin' to have a really show—
A Chris'mas tree—
An' there ain't been no invertation come
Fer Jes an' me!

Ma says that if she felt so bad because
She couldn't go
She'd *see their old tree farther'* fore she'd let
Them upstarts know!

A GARDEN MYSTERY

"But when the seeds woke up—guess what?
They'd got all changed around in bed."

I HAVE a garden all my own,
I digged it with my little spade;
I hoed it crumbly with my hoe
And, when it was all nice and made,
I put long rows of seed to bed
(Tucking them in so snug and tight)
And gave them each a bed-time drink,
In case it shouldn't rain at night.

Then, every morning, I ran quick
To see if they had come awake,
To tidy up their beds, and draw
New bed-quilt patterns with my rake.
I did not poke them once! I did
Exactly like the seedman said,
But when the seeds woke up—guess what?
They'd got all changed around in bed.

They sprawled all over everywhere!
Some were so squeezed they nearly died,
One had a whole row to itself
And some had tumbled quite outside.
Not one was where I tucked it in—
Now, wasn't that the strangest thing?
It couldn't have been me, because
I made the rows quite straight with string.

They must have done it all themselves
But *why* they did it no one knows—
Unless perhaps they felt the cold
And huddled up beneath the clothes?
Or p'r'aps they had a nawful fight,
Or p'r'aps were scratched up by our cat,
Or p'r'aps my rake—*Oh, goodness me;*
I wish I hadn't thought of that!

THE EXPLORER

"Little Billy Wilson meant
To find a big, new continent.

Little Billy Wilson ran
Away from home to be a man—
It took so long to grow up tall
By measuring against a wall,
"I just can't simply wait, that's all!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy Wilson meant
To find a big, new continent—
No parents surely should forbid
To find one like Columbus did?
"They ought to be quite in'trested!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy Wilson made
Provision for his escapade
With one large slice of buttered bread—
He wished he'd made it two instead,
"For travellers should be well-fed!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

When Little Billy Wilson had
Eaten the bread he grew quite sad,
The sadness mostly seemed to be
Halfway between his chin and knee—
"I really should have made it three!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy Wilson paused
And thought of all the grief he'd caused;
"How very sad Mamma will be
When she finds out there isn't me—
Besides there may be buns for tea!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy's parents kind,
Did not quite understand his mind,
And so they never really knew
Just what he ran away to do—
"*Nobody knows, 'cept me and you!*"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

BUGLES

It used to be
That, when I heard the bugle call,
I saw long ranks of soldiers sway
To battle music, brave and gay,
And banners flaunting on a wall;
But now I see—
Just Harry when he went away.

Harry was tall,
Taller than Pa (Pa didn't mind)
And just 'bout twice as tall as me,
All straight like our young poplar tree—
I liked him. He was awful kind;
Sometimes he'd call,
"Here, young 'un—hold this gun for me!"

It seems to me
That bugles have got changed somehow.
It used to be to hear one play
Would make me light and glad all day,
Playing at wars and fights—but now
I only see
Our Harry when we went away!

ADVENTURERS

When winter still is in the air
And not a green leaf anywhere,
There are great flocks of birds that wing
Over our town to find the Spring.

I often wonder what they know,
And how they find out where to go—
Perhaps, because they're up so high,
They see Spring somewhere in the sky.

If I could fly the way they do,
I would make haste to find Spring, too—
I'd pull her gently by the hand
And bring her back to my own land.

INSIDE EYES

When I am fast asleep at night
And both my eyes are shut up tight,
I have two *inside* eyes which see
Another world made just for me!

All the fine things I long to do,
And am not ever able to,
Are possible and easy, quite,
In this strange world I see at night—

Here there are doors that never lock,
And toys that run about and talk,
And roads that wind up like a stair
To where there's nothing but the air!

Here Rover, who's a dog by day,
Is changed in such a jolly way
Into a *person*—maybe he
Has inside eyes the same as me?

Next day we never say a word
About the things we've seen and heard,
But Rover winks at me and I
Wink back at him—and both know why!

Nurse won't believe that I can fly—
  She says I must not even try—
But Rover knows I rise with ease
  Above the tallest poplar trees.

Light as a cloud I float about
  And other little clouds come out
To play with me—and when I fall
  I do not bump my head at all.

One night the queerest wood I found
  Where dancing trees went circling round,
And when they saw that I was me
  They bowed as friendly as could be—

Oh, it is full of fine surprise
  This land I see with inside eyes,
And everything's so bright—'twould seem
  That waking up must be a dream!

THE GIFT RING

"'Twould be fine to be rich
But a maid must have beauty."

There's a leprecaun green
Making shoes for a fairy
Down there by the hawthorn
(So quiet and all!)
But if I can catch him—
It's difficult, very,—
Sure he'll give me a gift-ring,
With no words at all!

And if that gift-ring
Should have three wishes in it
I'd have the whole world
At my elbow and all—
But if one gift were there
And my choosing must win it
Why, the way I'd be wishing
I don't know at all!

'Twould be fine to be rich—
But a maid must have beauty,
And health is a good wish
That's lucky for all—
To be asking for goodness
Is surely a duty—
Och! there's *four* things I've thought
With no thinking at all!

So if the gift-ring
Had but one gift for choosing
What with health, wealth and beauty
And goodness and all—
I'd be feeling so sad
For the gifts I'd be losing
That the gift I would get
Would be no joy at all!

THE DIAMOND

My sister said she knew
Where a great diamond grew—
It was so far away
We walked most all a day,
Until I felt inside
Like I had come untied,
And both my feet got slow
And hard to lift, but, oh,
Diamonds are dancing things
That shine in golden rings
And fair princesses wear
Their brightness in their hair—
No way could be too far
To go where diamonds are!

. . . . . .

And then, my sister said
It was a joke, and led
Down to a railroad track,
With rails all dull and black
Criss-crossing in a maze,
Where trains go different ways—
"That is the diamond!" sister said.
Well—she'll be sorry when I'm dead!

ANNE-ALONE

Anne-alone has a house
Without any garden—
Squirrels hide their nuts there
With never a "Pardon!"
None ever call
At Anne-alone's house,
Those who come *stay,*
Even the field mouse!

There's plenty of room
For, with the door wide,
No one can tell
Outside from inside
You can sit on the roof—
All the birds do it—
They fly all around
And they fly right through it.

Anne-alone doesn't mind,
She likes their chatter.
Whenever a guest leaves
He goes away fatter—

But, should a boy come,
Somebody warns her,
And the house *isn't there*
But around the corner!

Of course you can guess
What Anne-alone's house is?
And, if you should watch
As still as a mouse is,
One day you may see
Anne-alone—but I doubt it,
She doesn't like boys
And that's all about it!

MANNERS

When I sit down, all clean and bright
Before the breakfast table, white,
With honey in a shining dish,
I'm most as good as I could wish—
For honey-comb and toast that curls
Are very good for little girls—
I never push my plate away,
Like the twins did the other day,
I never cry and say, "I won't!"
For I like honey, and they don't.

(2)

When mother has friends in to tea
I'm as polite as I can be,
I pass the sandwidges and cake
And never count how much they take—
Even if they take three or four
I always say, "Please have one more,"
(The twins would say, as like as not,
"My, don't you eat a nawful lot!")
I never even look—for they
May ask me out to tea someday!

THE EMPTY HOUSE

"A neighbor's boy declares to me
That the house is as full as a house can be."

THE old house stands in a pasture lot,
Battered and boarded and quite forgot.
Its door-sills yawn and its windows stare,
It's a long, long time since folk lived there—
Yet a neighbour's boy declares to me
That the house is as full as a house can be!

The Wind lives up on the topmost floor,
(Has lived there fifteen years and more)
And every night that he stays at home
You can hear him practice his saxophone—
Long-drawn-out notes with a sobbing swell
Are bits which he does extremely well.

The Sun has a lease of the southern side,
Its climbing vines are his special pride,
For, like many another travelling-man,
He gardens a bit wherever he can—
A first-class tenant, always bright
And never known to be out at night.

In the cool, north suites across the hall
You might think that nobody lived at all,
But their rents are paid, most punctually,
By the Field-Mouse, Limited, Company—
The "limited" means, as no doubt you've guessed,
Not more than twenty to a nest!

The kitchen flat, though somewhat bare,
Is a busy place for the Bees live there.
"The Busy Bees" is their business sign—
I'd rather it were theirs than mine!
For the gold they add to their honeyed store,
Is never enough, they must gather more.

Do you see that hole in the pantry floor?
It is Mr. Chipmunk's cellar door—
He is down there now, in a dreadful fuss,
For he knows no good of the likes of us,
And his knowledge of life leads him to fear
That nuts aren't safe with a boy too near—

In the wide west porch with its crumbling dome,
Live the Misses Bird, who were "not at home"—
They never are though you stay and stay,
But they come right back when you go away—
"It's because they are very shy, you see,"
The neighbor boy explained to me.

We wandered back through the swinging gate,
Where the path and the highway separate,
And the sign "To Let" was plainly seen,
Above the lilac's dusty green,
And I wondered what the tenants thought—
An empty house? Well, empty of what?

THE MIRACLE

THREE small seeds, as dry as rust,
Lie upon the sun-warmed dust—
Though you pierce their hardness through
Nothing will peep out at you;
Though you crush them, you will see
Nothing being or to be—

Yet, safe hidden from your eyes,
In one seed a great tree lies,
From whose branches, springing tall,
Birds shall send their mating call,
Nor shall wood-man rob its shade
Till new centuries be made.

This brown kernel, hard and sweet,
Holds a spear of springing wheat,
Which, when one brief summer's done,
Counts a score where now is one,
So that in your hand lies curled
Fields of gold to span the world.

This third seed, a tiny thing,
Hides the rose that poets sing,
Tender leaves which softly part,
Freeing from their crimson heart
All the gathered fragrance shed
By a million gardens dead—

"Three brown seeds that soon will be
Fruit and flower and a tree!"

See, the rain with padding feet,
Turns the warm dust dark and sweet,
Hiding all, that none may tell
Earth's most lovely miracle—
Three brown seeds that soon will be
Fruit and flower and a tree!

SONG OF THREE KINGS

THREE kings went forth to greet a King,
(O long ago and far!)
On three high camels in a string,
Their only guide a star.
They bore rich robes and golden rings
And myrrh and frankincense and things
Such as are suitable for kings.
(O long ago and far!)

Through lands all dark with sleep they rode
(O long ago and far!)
By little lanes of light that showed
The pathway of the star.
But nothing did the three kings say
Till they were far and far away
And, weary, the kind camels lay.
(O long ago and far!)

Gold was the sand they rested on,
(O long ago and far!)
Said one, "Our questing ends anon—
Behold, how near the star!

O Sirs, this King we ride to find
Moves in strange glory through my mind,
Resistless, terrible as wind."
(O long ago and far!)

"Friend, say you so?" with secret smile
(O long ago and far!)
The second searcher scanned awhile
The portent of the star.
"To me," he mused, " 'twould seem more right
That He whose star fills heaven with light
Should rule by wisdom, not by might."
(O long ago and far!)

The third king, thoughtful, paused to sup
(O long ago and far!)
Sweet water from a jade-green cup,
Serene beneath the star.
"High Sirs," said he, "it would appear
Wisdom hath ruled before—and fear—
If these be all, what seek we here?"
(O long ago and far!)

The quick wind blew the lifting sands
(O long ago and far!)
In golden rain against their hands,
Hiding awhile the star.

Again he spake: "Earth wearies of
Wise endless words and mailèd glove—
What of a King whose rule were love?"
(O long ago and far!)

The swift wind died, the soft sand fell,
(O long ago and far!)
The camels knelt with tinkling bell,
With glory blazed the star;
And no word more did any say,
But rose and rolled their mats away,
For it was dawn—and Christmas Day!
(O long ago and far!)

I WONDER AT THE WIND

"I wonder if he's lonely when
We shut him out at night?"

I WONDER at the Wind—he lifts
My kite so high and free,
Then tears its string from out my hand
To tangle in a tree!

Does he *like* people, do you think?
I never seem to know
Whether he wants to be a friend
Or tries to be a foe.

He fans my bonfire on the beach
'Till red flames leap and shout—
But every single chance he gets
He blows my candle out.

He'll give most any bird a ride,
To rest its tired wing,
Then turn and tumble down its nest
And laugh like anything!

Sometimes he seems so kind—when I
Was late for school to-day,
He blew me to the very door—
Then snatched my cap away!

I see him fill the idle sail
And guide it with his hand—
But what of all those ships that lie
In driftwood on the sand?

He has quite diff'rent voices, too—
A whisp'ry, singing sound
And then a scolding roar that makes
The trees shake in the ground.

My mother says, "It's just the wind,
Son, close the windows tight"—

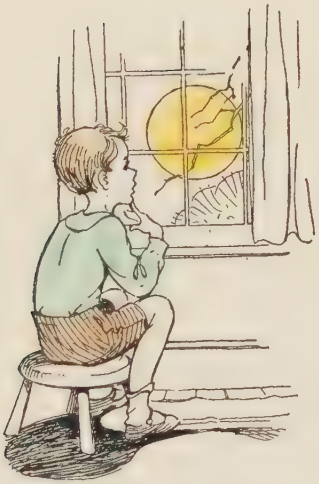
I wonder if he's lonely when
We shut him out at night?

Yet, when I left the door ajar
At supper —just in case—
He rushed right down the garden path
And slammed it in my face.

Of course that may have been just fun,
Because when I was ill
He came so quietly and cool
Across the window-sill,

And all the room was lovely with
The scent that lilacs send—
'Twas just as if he'd called to leave
A bouquet for a friend!

TRIBUTE



"Oh, I should like to buy the moon out of the sky."

My MOTHER's face is fair—
Soft darkness is her hair,
Like folded wings it lies
Above her shining eyes.

The breeze that passes by
Is like my mother's sigh—
Between my hands I press
Sweet perfumes from her dress.

THE SHINING SHIP

Her smile is swift and gay;
It comes and slips away,
And I can never find
Where it has hid behind.

Her feet along the ground
Make a most lovely sound!
And when my mother's there
No fear is anywhere—

Oh, I should like to buy
The moon out of the sky
And place it in her hand
So she would understand!

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Toronto

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